

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



A FULL-LENGTH PLAY

The Golden Goose

by
JUNE WALKER ROGERS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



© *The Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Illinois*

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

On all programs this notice should appear:

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

©MCMLXXIII by
JUNE WALKER ROGERS
Renewed ©MMI

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE GOLDEN GOOSE)

ISBN 0-87129-709-4

THE GOLDEN GOOSE
A Play for Children
For Eight Men, Eleven Women,
plus Several Bit Parts

CHARACTERS

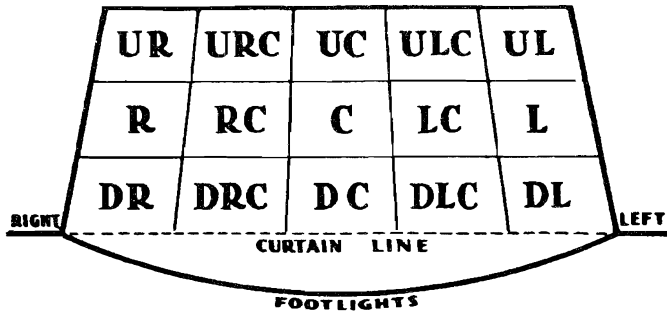
SIMPLETON
MOTHER
RUPERT } *Simpleton's brothers*
GEORGIE }
LITTLE OLD LADY
GOOSE
FATHER, *an innkeeper*
WIFE
MIRANDA } *his family*
HELENA }
CORA, *the cook*
PARSON
NELLIE
BRIDE
KING KRANK
QUEEN KIND
PRINCESS CRY BABY
COUNT JESTER
PRINCE GOOD HUMOR

Pages, Trumpeter, Members of the Court

PLACE: *In the kingdom of King Krank.*

TIME: *Long ago.*

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

The Golden Goose

SCENE: DR a flat depicts the front of a small cottage. It may have a practical door or the characters may walk around it to enter the cottage. DL is a large tree; UC, a flat with trees painted on it suggesting a wood.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The MOTHER is discovered before the cottage. She is doing laundry in a large tub with a washboard. Beside her are one or two laundry bags, full. Only her area of the stage is lit.)

MOTHER. Wash, scrub! Scrub, wash! (Looking at garment she is washing.) Dirt! I've even tried to pick the dirt off the fabric with my fingernails and still I cannot get it clean.

(SIMPLETON, her son, enters DR. He carries another full laundry bag which he drops beside the ones already there.)

SIMPLETON. Here I am, Dear Old Mom . . . back from the Widow Brown's. She'd like to have these by Thursday.

MOTHER. Thursday? Impossible! I'm still working on a week ago Wednesday. Oh, Simpleton, my son, I shall never catch up.

SIMPLETON. Why are you so far behind, Dear Old Mom?

MOTHER. I have no firewood . . . and so, I have no hot water. I've been washing in cold water . . . and look . . . (She holds up what she is washing - a gaily colored shirt.)

SIMPLETON. But I thought you were supposed to wash colored clothes in cold water.

MOTHER. This is a white shirt.

SIMPLETON. Oh.

MOTHER (looking at it). I think old Fred the Fiddler wore it to the pie-eating contest. . . . (She drops it back in the washtub.)

SIMPLETON. But, Dear Old Mom, why didn't you tell me? I'd've gone for firewood for you.

MOTHER. No, Simpleton, my fragile baby boy, your brothers Rupert and Georgie are older and stronger, so it's up to them. I shall have to disturb Rupert.

SIMPLETON. What's he doing?

MOTHER. Sleeping.

SIMPLETON. Still?

MOTHER. It's only the last three days. . . . (She calls off.) Rupert! (To SIMPLETON.) You know how he needs his sleep.

SIMPLETON. Well, if you won't let me get the firewood, I'll deliver this bundle to the manor house. (He picks up a wrapped package of laundry, looks into it.) Gee, Dear Old Mom, these sheets are awfully gray. . . .

MOTHER. Tell Lady Jane, gray is fashionable. (SIMPLETON nods and goes off DR.) Oh, two more days of this and my whole reputation as a washerwoman will go right down the drain. Rupert! (She calls into the cottage.) Rupert! Ru-u-u-u-pert! This is your mother calling!

(RUPERT drags himself on stage.)

RUPERT. Coming, Mother. . . .

MOTHER (sarcastically). That's my boy! Just look at that energy. . . . (He sinks slowly to his knees.) Look at that enthusiasm!

RUPERT (sinking from knees to sitting position). I'm as enthusiastic as I can be, Mother, considering . . .

MOTHER. Considering what?

RUPERT. Considering I've only had three days' sleep. . . . How can anyone survive on three days' sleep? (He rolls slowly over on his side.)

MOTHER. Up! Up! Up! (She pulls at his shoulders, forcing him to his feet.) Sleep! That's all you think about. And I need firewood . . . and as my oldest son, that's your chore.

RUPERT. Who needs old firewood anyway?

MOTHER (putting her arm around his shoulders).

Why, you do, son. Think of all those cozy warm nights by the fire, when you doze off and sleep and sleep and sleep. . . . (He puts his head on her shoulder and snores.) That does it! (She moves away; he sleeps standing up.) I'll just get your lunch. . . . (She picks up a small basket from behind laundry bags. Coming back to him, she yells:) Fire! (No reaction.) The dam broke . . . run for your life! (No reaction.) Sale on comfy beds. . . . (He awakes instantly.)

RUPERT. Comfy beds?

MOTHER. That's fine, Rupert. (Hands him the basket.) Now pick up your right foot--(He does.) --and put it down. (He does.) Now the left--(He does.)--and right and left, right, left, right . . . look for a big tree and cut it down. . . . (He starts walking upstage, then circling down as though on a winding path. She watches a moment, then says:) Where did I go wrong? (And exits R.)

(RUPERT continues his winding walk toward tree DL. As he goes, lights go down on cottage, come up on tree.)

RUPERT. . . . left . . . right . . . cut down the tree . . . left, right . . . (Getting to tree.) Why, here's a tree. (He pats the trunk.) Pretty solid. Lots of wood. It'll take a lot of strength to chop you down. (Yawns.) Maybe I should take a little nap before I start. (He puts the basket down and sits, back to tree, and sleeps.)

(A LITTLE OLD LADY enters L, going toward him.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Help a little old lady . . . help a poor starving old lady. . . . (She sees he is asleep, kicks his foot.) Wake up! Wake up!

RUPERT (in his sleep). Lemme alone, Ma, I'll chop some wood tomorrow.

LITTLE OLD LADY. Help a poor starving little old lady.

RUPERT (waking). Who are you? What do you want?

LITTLE OLD LADY. Just a poor creature who hasn't had a bite for days.

RUPERT (confused). You want me to bite you?

LITTLE OLD LADY. No, no! I'd like to share your food.

RUPERT. You . . . you woke me up to ask me that? (Settling back to sleep.) Go away, you bother me. . . . Nothing is as important as sleep.

LITTLE OLD LADY (angry). And sleep you will-- (She waves her hand at him, hypnotizing him.)-- for as long as you like. Sleep . . . you nasty, selfish . . . your eyelids are getting heavy . . . lazy, rude . . . nighty-night . . . impossible boy . . . sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep. . . . (She draws out the word as lights dim down and

out. She exits L. When other scene begins,
RUPERT slips out unnoticed.)

(Lights up on stage R. MOTHER is still washing but there are a few more bags of dirty wash beside her. SIMPLETON enters R with another laundry bag.)

MOTHER. Is that new dirty wash?

SIMPLETON. No, Dear Old Mom. It's old dirty wash. Everyone in the village is sending their laundry back. . . .

MOTHER. And still I have no hot water, no firewood, no word from Rupert. I sent him to the forest. It can't take him this long to find a tree.

SIMPLETON. Let me get your firewood, please, Dear Old Mom.

MOTHER. You're too innocent a child to be sent into the forest. No. It's up to Georgie, my second son.

SIMPLETON. Where is he?

MOTHER. Eating.

SIMPLETON. Again?

MOTHER. Georgie eats only three meals a day. He's just eating for seven or eight years from now, that's all. (Calls.) Georgie! . . . Geo----rgie! Get your hand out of the cookie jar! (She goes into cottage.)

SIMPLETON. Well, I may as well go pick up the rest of the rejects. (He exits R.)

(MOTHER pulls GEORGIE out of the cottage by the ear. He is munching an apple.)

MOTHER. You'll have to stop eating and get going. Something must've happened to your brother Rupert. He's been gone for two days.

GEORGIE. He's probably sleeping by the side of the road.

MOTHER. You're right. Wait'll I get my hands on him . . . I'll give him the worst punishment imaginable.

GEORGIE. Send him to bed without supper?

MOTHER. I'll give him supper. I just won't let him go to bed. Now stop munching and start walking. If you don't bring some firewood back before dawn, I'll send you to bed without supper.

GEORGIE. I'm going, I'm going. . . . (He takes out a stalk of celery, starts eating it as he walks the circular path Rupert took. MOTHER watches a minute.)

MOTHER. And to think, when he was a baby, I kept saying, "Eat . . . eat!" (She goes into cottage.)

(Lights down on R, coming up on tree DL.)

GEORGIE (walking). If I'd known I was going to be so active today, I'd've eaten a little extra snack . . . like a steak . . . and onions . . . and potatoes . . . and peas . . . and . . . oh, I've got to stop thinking about food. My stomach is growling and I haven't even thought about dessert. (To his stomach.) Calm down! You know I always take good care of you. (He reaches the tree, sees Rupert's lunch basket.) Oh! Rupert's basket . . . (Looks in it.) . . . and filled with goodies. . . . Where can he be? (Calls softly.) Rupert? . . . Rupert? (Looks around, whispers.) Rupert? You haven't had your dindin. Nowhere around. Well, Mom can't say I didn't try to find him. Might as well sit down and have a little nourishment before I start on this tree. (Sits down, back to tree, takes sandwich from basket.) Mmmmm . . . ham. . . .

Mom always liked Rupert better than me.

(LITTLE OLD LADY enters L.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Help a little old lady! A poor starving old lady!

GEORGIE (taking milk bottle from basket). Mmmm-fresh milk! Nothing tastes as good when you're thirsty.

LITTLE OLD LADY (clutching her throat). My throat is as dry as a desert . . .

GEORGIE. Dessert?

LITTLE OLD LADY. Desert!

GEORGIE (losing interest in her, draining bottle). Good to the last drop.

LITTLE OLD LADY. A drop! A drop! If only I had a drop to drink. (She falls to her knees, dramatically clutching her throat.)

GEORGIE (looking up). How dare you intrude on me when I'm eating?

LITTLE OLD LADY. Obviously food is all you care about . . . and that's what you're going to get. Food . . . food . . . food . . . till it's coming out of your ears. (She takes a lollipop from her pocket and uses it to hypnotize him, backing off stage as he follows, licking the lollipop as she waves it.) Look at the gorgeous lollipop . . . all for you, little piggy-wiggy. Lollipop . . . lollipop. . . . (They go off L. Lights down L.)

(Lights up on SIMPLETON and MOTHER R. He holds a small axe.)

SIMPLETON. But, Dear Old Mom, I'm the only son left and it's my duty to find my brothers. Poor Rupert . . . poor Georgie . . .

MOTHER. Don't "poor Rupert, poor Georgie" me!

They're probably somewhere along the road eating and sleeping. One each.

SIMPLETON. Or they could have fallen into a ditch and broken both legs; or . . . been captured by a pack of wolves . . . or, even worse they . . .

MOTHER. Oh, forgive me. My poor, sweet, innocent boys! Yes, yes, Simpleton. You must go out and rescue your darling brothers.

SIMPLETON (standing at attention and saluting).

Yes, sir, Dear Old Mom. (He hits his head with the axe.) Ouch! I'm taking my axe.

MOTHER. I see.

SIMPLETON (sticking it into his belt). I might as well get some firewood while I'm in the forest.

MOTHER (picking up lunch basket beside her).

Careful with the axe. . . . Here's your lunch. I'm sorry, it's just stale bread, rancid butter, and sour milk, but it's all I have left.

SIMPLETON. That's all right, Dear Old Mom, it's my favorite. And don't worry, Dear Old Mom, everything's going to be all right. I've been waiting for the chance to prove to you what a big boy I am. (He kisses her and starts circular path the others have taken. She watches.)

MOTHER. Now that's a son. One out of three ain't bad. (She exits into the cottage.)

(SIMPLETON walks along, happy, whistling. As he walks, lights go down on the cottage DR and come up on tree DL.)

SIMPLETON. What a glorious day. . . . (Looking up.) Hi there, Robin. . . . What's new, Whip-poorwill? Oh, ho, and what do I see here? A big, beautiful tree. Almost too beautiful to chop down. But . . . (Putting his arm around the trunk.) . . . I've got to do it, old pal. Mom needs

your wood and if you knew my mom, you'd know you were going in a good cause. (He puts down basket, takes out axe.)

(LITTLE OLD LADY enters L.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Help a little old lady. Help a poor, starving little old lady.

SIMPLETON (turning to her). Why, hello, dear Little Old Lady. You surprised me! What are you doing out here in the forest alone?

LITTLE OLD LADY. Questioning strangers.

SIMPLETON. Oh. That's hard work for a Little Old Lady. You need someone strong to help you.

LITTLE OLD LADY (staggering and clutching him for support). And I haven't eaten for days. Can you help me?

SIMPLETON. Oh, ma'am, you're pitiful. Of course I'll share whatever I have with you. But first . . . (He takes off his jacket and puts it on the ground.) . . . sit on my jacket. You'll be more comfortable, dear Little Old Lady. The ground is damp, muddy and yicky.

LITTLE OLD LADY (sitting). How kind you are. Do I remind you of your mother?

SIMPLETON. No. She wouldn't do a dumb thing like hanging around in the woods.

LITTLE OLD LADY. And you're honest.

SIMPLETON. But if she were ever lost and starving, I would hope that someone would show her the same courtesy.

LITTLE OLD LADY (patting his cheek). You're a good boy.

SIMPLETON. I try to be, dear Little Old Lady. Now, this is embarrassing but all I have to share is some stale bread, rancid butter and sour milk.

LITTLE OLD LADY. I see. Why don't you look in the basket?

SIMPLETON (reaching into basket). All right. I'll just get the stale bread . . . (He brings out a roast chicken, looks confused.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Delicious!

SIMPLETON. . . . the rancid butter . . . (He takes out a lovely-looking cheese.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Hm, Stilton . . . imported . . . my very favorite. . . .

SIMPLETON (very confused). And the sour milk. . . . (He takes out a bottle of wine.)

LITTLE OLD LADY (checking label). . . . A very good year . . .

SIMPLETON. But I know she said stale bread . . .

LITTLE OLD LADY. Don't question, Simpleton-- enjoy.

SIMPLETON. But . . . how did you know my name?

LITTLE OLD LADY. I guessed. Take out the glasses.

SIMPLETON. There aren't any glasses. (He takes out two wine glasses.) Why would there be wine glasses?

LITTLE OLD LADY. Because I hate drinking out of those little paper cups.

SIMPLETON. How could my mother know that?

LITTLE OLD LADY. She must be a mind reader.

SIMPLETON (logically). I don't think so. If she could read minds, then she'd know where my brothers are.

LITTLE OLD LADY. Brothers! Do you have two brothers?

SIMPLETON. Yes . . . yes, I do.

LITTLE OLD LADY. Is one a sleeping good-for-nothing and the other a piggy-wiggly glutton?

SIMPLETON. Yes, yes! Have you seen them?

LITTLE OLD LADY. No. But don't fret. I know they'll turn up. Bad pennies always do. Now,

don't you think you should start chopping some firewood before it gets too dark?

SIMPLETON (saluting). Yes, ma'am. Right away, ma'am. (He takes his axe and starts for tree.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Such a polite boy. It's a pleasure to do business with you.

SIMPLETON (kicking his toe in the ground). Aw, shucks, dear Little Old Lady, just doin' things the only way I know how. (He examines the tree. LITTLE OLD LADY puts things back in lunch basket. SIMPLETON lifts axe, is about to strike, when:)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Wait! Don't chop it there!

SIMPLETON. No? (He shifts position, lifts axe again.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. No. Not there either!

SIMPLETON. If you say so. (Cautiously.) How about here? (He points to another place.)

LITTLE OLD LADY. Go around to the back
And give it a whack.

SIMPLETON. That rhymes! (He goes behind tree, repeating the rhyme in a singsong manner.)
Around to the back and give it a whack . . . a
whack in the back . . . (Sound of chopping.)
. . . in back for a whack . . . (More chopping.)
Then a cry of surprise.) Wow . . . wow,
wowie! . . .

LITTLE OLD LADY. What do you see
Inside of the tree?

SIMPLETON (sticking his head out from behind tree).
What do I see inside of this tree? Wo-ow-ow-ow-
ow . . . (His head disappears. We hear another:)
Wo-ow-ow-ow-ow . . . (LITTLE OLD LADY
taps her foot impatiently. He comes from be-
hind tree.) What's inside that trunk, I'd never-a
thunk!

LITTLE OLD LADY. Well?